

The Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A beverage preparation machine for preparing a beverage from a cartridge containing one or more beverage ingredients comprising a first piercing element for forming an inlet, in use, in a cartridge received in the beverage preparation machine and a second piercing element for forming an outlet, in use, in said cartridge, characterised in that the first and second piercing elements are formed as a single removable unit unattached to the beverage preparation machine.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A beverage preparation machine for preparing a beverage from a cartridge containing one or more beverage ingredients comprising a first piercing element for forming an inlet, in use, in a cartridge received in the beverage preparation machine and a second piercing element for forming an outlet, in use, in said cartridge, characterised in that the first and second piercing elements are formed as a single removable unit;

~~A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 1~~ further comprising a fixed lower part and an upper part rotatable relative to the lower part, the upper part being moveable from an open position, in which the upper part is disengaged from the lower part for receiving a cartridge, and a closed position, in which the upper part is engaged with the lower part, wherein the removable unit is mounted, in use, in the fixed lower part.

Claim 3 (Original): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 2 wherein the inlet piercer and outlet piercer are oriented vertically and parallel to one another.

Claim 4 (Original): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 3 wherein the inlet piercer and outlet piercer are made of plastics materials.

Claim 5 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 2 wherein the removable unit is mounted, in use, in a recess formed in the fixed lower part.

Claim 6 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 5 wherein the second piercing element is surrounded by a ledge which is raised relative to its surroundings.

Claim 7 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 2 wherein the second piercing element is larger in diameter than the first piercing element.

Claim 8 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 2 wherein the removable unit is unattached to the beverage preparation machine.

Claim 9 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 2 wherein the removable unit only has a single first piercing element and a single second piercing element.

Claim 10 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a fixed lower part and an upper part rotatable relative to the lower part, the upper part being moveable from an open position, in which the upper part is disengaged from the lower part for receiving a cartridge, and a closed position, in which the upper part is engaged with the lower part, wherein the removable unit is mounted, in use, in the fixed lower part.

Claim 11 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 10 wherein the inlet piercer and outlet piercer are orientated vertically and parallel to one another.

Claim 12 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 11 wherein the inlet piercer and outlet piercer are made of plastics materials.

Claim 13 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 1 wherein the removable unit is mounted, in use, in a recess formed in the fixed lower part.

Claim 14 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 13 wherein the second piercing element is surrounded by a ledge which is raised relative to its surroundings.

Claim 15 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 1 wherein the second piercing element is larger in diameter than the first piercing element.

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Claim 16 (New): A beverage preparation machine as claimed in claim 1 wherein the removable unit only has a single first piercing element and a single second piercing element.